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ABSTRACT

This study examined the enculturation process experienced by two beginning teachers during their first year of teaching in Queensland (Australia) secondary schools, focusing on teacher socialization and teacher development. Data were gathered using participant observation, verbalized thinking, and in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed by isolating both common and different experiences of the two participants and attempting to account for them in terms of developmental "stage" theories and the personal and situational factors which influenced the participants' development. Significant issues confronting the two teachers included: maintenance of efficient professional practice in the face of heavy clerical and extracurricular pressures and poor health; maximization of teacher development opportunities; tensions created by conflicting demands of background and practice; lack of a contextually oriented classroom management plan; and the isolated nature of teaching. The development of both teachers seemed to follow less a "staged" pattern than a "rhythmic" pattern. Neither teacher began in survival mode and then progressed to "advanced beginner" or "mastery." One remained in survival mode for the duration of her first year of teaching; the other began teaching as an advanced beginner and found herself struggling to survive in response to personal and situational factors. (Contains 24 references.) (JDD)

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The Idiosyncratic Nature of Beginning Teaching: reaching clearings by different paths

Paper presented at the 1994 Annual Conference of the

Australian Teacher Education Association

Brisbane

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INTRODUCTION

Broadly speaking, the purpose of this study was to examine the enculturation process as experienced by beginning secondary school teachers during their first year of teaching. It used a qualitative approach to examine the experiences of four teachers who graduated from teacher education courses at the end of 1992, taking up appointments in Queensland secondary schools at the start of the 1993 school year. This paper examines the experiences of two of them.

The study explored two aspects of the enculturation process viz. teacher socialisation and teacher development. It argued that both terms are used to describe similar processes. 'Development', however, has connotations reflecting a more realistic view ot enculturation in that the locus of control lies more firmly with the teacher. 'Socialisation', on the other hand, has more passive connotations.

The study's general focus was 'stage' theory, a strand of career-development theory. The essence of this theory as it applies to teaching is that teachers progressively gain professional knowledge and beliefs by proceeding through a series of identifiable 'stages'. The theory was examined in this study to determine its usefulness as a means of describing accurately the teacher-enculturation process during the first year of teaching.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Enculturation as a Socialisation Process

Teacher socialisation has been conceptualized as taking place not only during preservice education and through the early professional experiences of the novice teacher, but also through those experiences which precede preservice teacher education. Zeichner (1986:25, 26), for example, highlights the powerful influence of biography on teacher socialisation, noting at the same time that little is known about the particular sources of this influence. Goodson (1992) claims that studies of teacher enculturation tend to focus too heavily on the teacher's practice, whereas a more appropriate approach would concentrate on the teacher as a person. Noting that teachers' backgrounds and life experiences are idiosyncratic and unique, Goodman (1992:114) advocates

a 'capturing of the teacher's voice' in a way that will illustrate the importance of the teacher's biography in the enculturation process. A major component of biography in this context is the anticipatory teacher socialisation of the beginning teacher's own school experiences.

The Teacher as Pupil

Lortie (1973:487) 'suspects that the protracted exposure to potent models [during teachers' own schooling] leads teachers-to-be to internalise (largely unconsciously) modes of behaviour which are triggered in later teaching'. A large proportion of the teacher respondents in his Five Towns study (Lortie, 1975) testify to the important influence of former teachers in their own approach to teaching. Recruits bring to teacher education programs implicit theories and exemplars about teaching which owe their origins to an 'apprenticeship of observation'. This preparation, claims Lortie (1975:67), favours continuity rather than change, and a corresponding strongly biographical orientation to pedagogical decision making. Britzman (1986) similarly refers to the role of compulsory mass education as an exemplar in making teaching one of the most socially familiar professions. 'They [prospective teachers] bring [to teacher education] their implicit institutional biographies- the cumulative experience of school lives- which, in turn, inform their knowledge of the student's world, of school structure, and of curriculum' (Britzman, 1986:443).

Socialisation Through Preservice Education

Another source of teacher socialisation is the preservice teacher education course undertaken. While Denscombe (1980:284) is dismissive of the impact which preservice education has on the socialisation of beginning teachers, according to writers such as Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981), its impact is uncertain.

Debate on the role of preservice education in socialising recruits reflects different views of teaching and teacher education. In polarized terms, those who see teacher education as equipping novices to fill existing job specifications support a technicist, 'what works' approach. Those who want teachers to be change agents who critically evaluate current practices favour a more socially critical theoretical approach. Both positions demand that attention be given to the role of teacher education in the teacher socialisation process.

> Hence, whilst there is some disagreement about the precise effects of university teacher education, we can no longer assume the neutrality which explanations of anticipatory teacher socialisation allowed. The impact of teacher education should be regarded at least as problematic, rather than taken for granted as reactionary, liberalising, a wasteland or a wash-out.
>
> (Martinez, 1992:60)

The extent to which student teachers' practicum experiences contribute to socialisation into the culture of teaching is problematic. Not only are field studies a significant part of all preservice teacher education courses in Queensland tertiary institutions, but typically these practicum experiences are also identified by teachers as the most valuable part of their course. While the salience of the practicum experience probably heightens its impact upon the preservice teacher, it should not be forgotten that practice can be very diverse, and the degree of support and types of demands placed upon him/her extremely varied. Kagan (1992:150) argues that practica 'appear to be structured idiosyncratically according to the kind of relationship that develops between a novice and a seasoned teacher who acts as host'. While the practicum is a period of supervised induction, its usefulness as a powerful agent in initiating beginners into their career is limited by its idiosyncratic nature.

Socialisation Through the School

Most schools have an induction program to help ease new teachers into the profession. Formal induction programs may contribute to teacher socialisation, but their influence is limited and variable (Smith, Cook, Cuddihy, Muller, Nimmo and Thomas (1991). The informal influence of colleagues is likely to be more important, but the professional isolation of teachers is relevant in this regard. Several writers, including Denscombe (1982), Little (1990), Lortie (1975), Nias (1989), and Zeichner and Tabachnick (1986) attest to the individualistic nature of teaching.

Because of the 'cellular organisation' of schools (Lortie, 1975:72), teachers are isolated, and insulated for the majority of their working day from one another's work. The physical separation of teachers into self-contained classrooms can also mean professional, psychological and

social isolation. It lessens the degree to which teachers are able to develop shared professional knowledge or a collegial sense of the 'state of the art'. While support to help resolve a dilemma is usually forthcoming, the best the novice can often hope for is a snatched conversation with a colleague in a noisy, crowded staffroom when a time interval separates the moment of indecision from the support-seeking discussion.

Thus far, theoretical frameworks emphasizing teacher socialisation have been examined. While these theoretical frameworks give differing emphasis to particular socialising contexts, ranging from experience prior to preservice education to beginning teaching, they tend to view beginning teachers (or student teachers) as relatively passive agents in the socialisation process. A contrasting theoretical perspective is that underpinning models of stage development. While no fully developed theory of teacher development exists (Feiman-Nemser and Floden, 1986), in essence, stage theory views the teacher enculturation process as an invariant sequence of orientations towards teaching as practitioners gain experience. Thus teachers 'develop' by passing through a series of predictable 'stages'. The manner in which this occurs is dependent on a number of factors, and consequently the time taken to move through one stage and into another varies among individuals.

Enculturation as a Developmental Process: 'stage' theories

Among the better known stage theories of teacher development are those of Fuller (Fuller, 1969; Fuller and Bown, 1975; Ryan, 1986; Marshall, Fittinghof and Cheney, 1990; and Berliner, 1988). The number, duration and labelling of stages differ from theorist to theorist. Thus Ryan, for example, building on the theory of Fuller and Bown, distinguishes four stages: a fantasy stage (preceding school teaching), a survival stage, a mastery stage, and an impact stage. Berliner distinguishes five stages viz. novice, advanced beginner, competent teacher, proficient teacher, and expert teacher. While there is no uniformity, there is a degree of consistency in the way stage theorists account for the process of beginning teacher professional development. Having reviewed 40 'learning-to-teach' studies, Kagan (1992) refutes criticism that this literature is too idiosyncratic to provide generalisations about the process of teacher development. She claims that the studies yield 'remarkably consistent themes that partially confirmed and elaborated both Fuller's and Berliner's models' (Kagan, 1992:130).

Nevertheless, while the notion of being able to explain teacher development in terms of a series of identifiable stages has some appeal, doubt must exist as to the precise nature of the actual stages themselves. Developmental stages are not observable entitities with water-tight boundaries. In practice, the difficulty of determining an individual's precise stage of development should help dissuade us from casting teachers in rigid, overly simplified categories (Levine, 1989:85).

The notion of progress through and across stages is also problematic. Huberman's professional life cycle literature review (1989) claims that while there are some reasonably strong trends that recur across stage theory studies, the empirical literature identifying stages and phases in teaching is uneven and inconclusive.

> Career development is... a processs, not a series of events. For some, this process may be linear, but for others there will be plateaus, regressions, dead-ends, spurts, discontinuities. So the identification of phases and sequences must be handled gingerly, as an analytic heuristic, as a descriptive rather than a normative construct.
>
> (Huberman, 1989:32)

Bullough (1989) notes similarly that 'human development defies easy categorization. It is seldom smooth, never conflict free, and frequently characterized by backsliding' (Bullough, 1989:17). The broad picture of teacher career development and human development, described by Huberman and Bullough respectively, is just as applicable to beginning teacher development. Novices obviously do not all have identical enculturation experiences. Nor do they all proceed through developmental stages with robot-like precision. 'Stage theories' provide one explanation for how neophytes develop, but uncertainty exists as to how well the neatly packaged 'stage models' reflect actual teaching experiences: the career paths of individuals are neither invariant nor universal.

In summary, both socialisation and stage theory perspectives have limitations. While socialisation perspectives overemphasise the uniformity of a culture of teaching and the passivity of the novice teacher in the enculturation process, models of stage development do not

address the matter of how teachers progress from one stage to another, nor why they develop a variety of forms of culture.

THE STUDY

Method

The two teachers have been selected on the basis that they epitomize the varied means by which beginning teachers cope with the demands of the professional roles and the subtle interplay of contextual and personal factors. During 1993, data were gathered using participant observation, verbalised thinking and in-depth interviews. They were analysed by isolating both common and different experiences of the participants, and attempting to account for them in terms of developmental 'stage' theories and the personal and situational factors which influenced the participants' development.

Results

Obviously the present paper does not allow for a detailed exploration of the experiences of the two teachers. What follows represents a highly selective account of the experiences of two beginning teachers, but, at the same time, a genuine attempt has been made to allow their authentic voices to speak out, and to highlight those experiences viewed as important by the participants themselves. In other words, an attempt has been made to reveal the phenomenological worlds of the participants.

Laura

Laura's passion for music began at age five, with Grand-ma's gift of a piano. Laura and her parents entered into an agreement regarding lessons, and thus began a way of life described by Laura as one 'that I couldn't possibly do without'.

There were several teaching connections in her family, but Laura discounted these as influences in her decision to be a teacher. Of much greater significance, she claimed, was the impact of her music teachers when she was a young student. Among her strongest motives to teach 'was a child-like desire to be like these women who I had as my mentors'.

Some role models from her own schooling influenced Laura's teaching. Her favourite teachers treated her 'like an adult, and with respect'. They

were also the teachers who were youthful (in spirit), open and approachable, and interesting. Laura acknowledged the 'huge influence' of three of her secondary school teachers on her own teaching, noting how she reflected at times on how they might respond to particular situations.

Laura's achievements as a secondary school student helped promote her personal development. For all five years she was a member of the debating team, a member of the student council and a participant in the school musical. As well as being school captain, she was house captain, a member of the magazine committee, and a Lions' Youth of the Year. Her heavy extra-curricular involvement foreshadowed in some ways her own extra-mural involvement as a beginning secondary school teacher. Some of the effects were, however, quite different, in that the pressure of so many extra tasks proved inimical to her development as a teacher.

Laura prepared for teaching by completing a four-year Bachelor of Music course. She was ambivalent about its usefulness, feeling well prepared in terms of content, but was inadequately prepared for the pressures of first-year teaching. As the year progressed, for example, Laura became increasingly frustrated at her lack of knowledge of budgeting and purchasing procedures, and of the extent of the general paperwork requirements for teachers.

She described her practicum experiences in similar vein. 'I think prac. was a bit unrealistic because I never saw what really went on at the desk level at high school'. In voicing this concern, Laura was echoing the sentiments of Clark who claimed that 'undoubtedly, [preservice] students' conceptions of teaching are incomplete, for they typically see and hear only the performance side of teaching'. (Cited in Weinstein, 1989:53) Laura was particularly referring to the plethora of non-teaching tasks required of teachers, compared with her own limited non-teaching tasks as a preservice teacher.

Laura began teaching at the start of 1993. She was appointed to a secondary school in a country area of the Education Department's Metropolitan West Region. Her university curriculum areas were music and chemistry. She was allocated all of the music taught in the school, with the subject being restricted to the junior school. She was also assigned a junior science class.

Laura's staffroom was a long, narrow, overcrowded room which provided very little privacy for its occupants. It was, however, close to the music room, where most of Laura's lessons took place. The room had access to another classroom, thereby, in the physical sense at least, facilitating co-operative teaching. Laura did teach co-operatively on a number of occasions during the year. She also found observation visits by members of administration generally helpful. Although particular circumstances resulted in her feeling inadequate and embarrassed on occasions, Laura claimed that her classroom contacts with colleagues were 'very helpful' and potentially valuable for 'all beginning teachers'. Her experience indicates that problems of isolation can be overcome in varying degrees by the situational factors of building design and timetabling arrangements. Obviously, personal factors (such as Laura's perceptions of personal inadequacy) would also have significance.

Laura was heavily involved in extra-curricular activities from the outset, and especially so after the mid-year vacation, when preparation for the school musical had gained full momentum. Her time-consuming involvement with the musical coloured her perceptions of staff, students and administration to some extent. Staff and students, for example, were not as supportive as she hoped, in the early stages of production. Administration was not always sensitive to the way her extra-curricular work-load was impacting on her primary teaching duties. 'I don't think people are aware of the amount of time it takes to, say, whip up the National Anthem for the student council investiture'. It seems clear-cut that Laura's particularly heavy extra-curricular involvement was largely a function of her role as music teacher, which raises the issue of the extent to which extra curricular involvement of beginning teachers may be subject specific.

Laura's relationships with other staff members were generally positive. Many had been at the school for several years and Laura felt that a number of them had lost much of their commitment to teaching. She pointed to an unsupportive administration and poorly motivated students as reasons for their lack of enthusiasm. Laura described her observation as 'very sad and frustrating, and depressing for a new teacher'. She felt, however, that she was generally well accepted as a member of the staff community and she spoke enthusiastically of the supportiveness of most of the staff.

In common with many beginning teachers (e.g. see Smith et al., 1991), Laura found the demands of teaching exhausting and intrusive. In February, for example, Laura commented that she would arrive home from school exhausted, then spend time each evening preparing for the next day. She explained that time at school was hectic.

> I feel like when I am at school, I don't sit down. I'm lucky if I have lunches and morning teas. I get to school an hour before school starts. I just feel like the only time I have a social life is on Saturdays, because I spend Sunday at the school as well. Yes, it's a pretty heavy sort of situation at the moment.

As mentioned above, Laura believed that the inequitable distribution of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities was adversely affecting her teaching. She commented that, at times when she should be using her spare periods for correction and preparation, 'I am doing things like running around chasing up instruments and students and working out parts with the musical and rewriting or making backing tapes'. The pressure was obviously and understandably taking its toll. At the end of March, Laura lamented that

> My lunch times are all taken up and so are my morning teas, so I feel like... for a start I don't eat when I'm at school because I don't have time, so by the end of the day, I am so worn out that I really can't be teaching effectively. I feel that at times when I have had too much to do, I don't teach well, because I am not as well prepared as I should be.

The pressures experienced by Laura in her first year did not stem only from her work context. By May, Laura found herself under considerable pressure by virtue of her engagement to be married. The relationship developed quickly, and, as a result, Laura's private life had 'become a little bit more hectic and out of control than it had been...'. Priorities also changed.

> [My hectic private life] is affecting my work, as I have sort of implied through the whole interview, in that I have been more tired and distracted, and not really concentrating as much on putting in all the time that I used to in preparation.

Overall, Laura acknowledged that the quality of her teaching had diminished.

> ...last term, I was doing a better job than I am this term, because this term, I am preoccupied. I am experimenting this term. I am gaining the confidence to experiment, but I am only doing that because I am not prepared.

Laura's stress was exacerbated by ill health during most of the first half of the year during which time she suffered glandular fever. Not until August, did she believe that the glandular fever had finally disappeared.

> I think my glandular fever's finally gone, which is really positive. My blood pressure's up at the moment, but that's all right, that's just stress related. But I'm feeling O.K.

Laura was critical of the role of the school administration in making extreme demands on her time, although she acknowledged that when she made her plight known, they did relieve her of some duties. Nevertheless, she remained critical of administration for what she perceived as an inequitable allocation of extra-curricular duties, and insufficient support in helping teachers overcome the lack of motivation that she perceived characterized many of the students.

Summation

In essence, Laura's decision to enter teaching was born out of a love of music. Her life experiences before beginning teaching provided a promising background for her new career. She believed her four years of tertiary study left her ill-prepared to perform some fundamental roles as teacher, but they did give her a strong grounding generally in implementing the secondary music curriculum. In addition, she already had five years as a private music tutor supporting her, and she had clear perceptions of what quality teaching involved through the positive and negative examples of former teachers. While feeling some insecurity about her abilities, she began teaching with every reason to be confident about her chances of success.

Significant issues which confronted Laura during her first year of teaching included:

a) maintenance of efficient professional practice in the face of heavy clerical and extra-curricular pressures, and poor health
b) maximization of teacher development opportunities from an initially high level of competence, especially in the light of some personal insecurity regarding her abilities and particular situational factors

June

There seemed to be a certain inevitability about June's decision to become a teacher. Teaching is 'in the family', with four brothers currently teaching. June sustained a feeling throughout her own schooling that she would like to become a teacher. This was reinforced by her 'general love of learning' and her enjoyment of intellectual stimulation and challenge. June's ten years as a university librarian helped her form an image of students as hard working, cooperative people. She assumed that secondary school students would have similar characteristics. Buoyed by a feeling, which was confirmed by others, that she relates well to young people, June successfully undertook eleven years of part-time study to qualify herself for teaching with a Bachelor of Arts and a Graduate Diploma of Education.

Her own schooling was unhappy. Educated in a private, coeducational primary school and a private girls' secondary school, she was traumatised by the harsh discipline instituted by many of the teachers. 'I was frightened by many of my teachers...I hated school. I cried a lot. I used to feel sort of sick before classes and things like that'. Her schooling in general was unpleasant, and her final year at school particularly so. As a result, June deferred for many years her childhood ambition to be a teacher.

It seems paradoxical that June would even contemplate being a teacher after such experiences. A resolution of the paradox probably lies in several areas: firstly, June's family history of siblings becoming teachers; secondly, the personal factors of her long-standing desire to seek intellectual stimulation and her belief that she related well to young people; thirdly, her positive associations with students in her position of librarian; and finally, a highly significant event in her own schooling.

Amid the trauma of a fearful schooling, June found someone whom she poetically describes as a 'beautiful teacher' who was 'like a light in the darkness'. In her mid-sixties, this teacher taught 'through love of her subject and love of life, rather than through fear of something'. In particular, June appreciated this teacher's indefinable 'gift' for teaching and her sense of good fun and June aspired to emulate her in her own teaching: 'If I can find her in me and give it to the kids, then it would be great'. June resolved to bring to her teaching the positive elements that she had largely been denied as a school student.

Having fun in the process of teaching and learning was a desire, even an expectation, that June carried into her teaching from her associations with this teacher and from her earlier positions in the workforce.

> I think I had a concept that it might be how it was in other jobs where I was one of the gang and we'd chat a little bit and we'd laugh a little bit and get the work done and have fun at an adult level.... I thought that we'd be able to have little repartees in the classroom and then be able to get back to work.

June also had other expectations. She thought, for example, in line with the proposition put forward by Kagan (1992), that students were going to be like she was as a student. She thought initially that 'if you treat people like adults, they will respond as adults'.

Like Laura, June began her teaching career with the Queensland State Education Department at the start of the 1993 school year. Her appointment was a secondary school with 1300 students in the Department's Metropolitan East Region. Her curriculum areas were German and Japanese, and her teaching assignment was confined to these subjects. Most of her classes were in the junior school, mainly Year 8. Throughout the year, her extra-curricular involvement was restricted to relatively minor committee membership, and roller skating supervision.

June shared a small, crowded staffroom with two other language teachers, a history teacher and three part-time language teachers. In common with most State secondary staffrooms, the room suffered from a conspicuous lack of privacy for staff.

This was in contrast to the 'egg-crate' like nature of most of the classrooms. All of June's lessons were taught in traditional, single classrooms, some of which are brighter and educationally more functional following recent refurbishment. Physical improvements notwithstanding, the 'cellular organization' of the school (Lortie, 1975:72) and the demands of a busy teaching schedule faced by all of the teachers in her staffroom rendered June subject to the professional, psychological and social isolation referred to on pages 3 and 4. Her colleagues were supportive, but June felt let down by her school administration until particular incidents changed her thinking in this regard. June's situation resembled, to a large extent, the one described by Hargreaves:

> Team-teaching, exploration of new methods, collaborative approaches to improved teaching, constructive collegial criticism of classroom performance- none of these things are fostered by the isolation and individualism of the existing culture of teaching.
>
> (Hargreaves, 1988:226)

The school's clientele was, generally speaking, the children of working class families, some of whom came from island communities in Moreton Bay. Also enrolled was a group of children from a wealthy canal estate. While noting that the school contained 'a few roughies', June described most of the students as 'fairly polite and well meaning'. Her own classes mirrored this profile of the general school population.

Beginning teaching differed significantly from June's expectations. She quickly realized that high school students do not all respond positively to being treated as adults. Nor was there a modicum of fun with most classes. '...if I even have a bit of a joke with the year eight kids, the lid flies off and it's very hard to get it back on'. The absence of fun in her classes troubled June from the start of her teaching, and persisted throughout the year. Her strong desire to facilitate learning in a friendly, light-hearted atmosphere, a wish inspired by recollections of her 'favourite' teacher, was not supported by a management approach appropriate to the situation.

June seemed unaware of the need to try to create a work-oriented classroom climate wherein an appropriate balance between a firm, businesslike approach and an atmosphere of warmth and friendly

encouragement was initiated and maintained. Instead, she rejected the approach of her own authoritarian teachers, and enthusiastically embraced the kindly approach of her 'softer' teachers. A recurring theme of June's first-year beginning teaching experience was her attempts to replace lids on containers of students who responded disappointingly to her relatively liberal approach.

June expressed disquiet that her preservice Graduate Diploma course had inadequately prepared her to perform the day-to-day tasks, and to meet the exigencies, of secondary teaching. In keeping with the findings of Bullough (1989), Dawes and Ticehurst (1978), Kagan (1992) and Smith et al. (1991), she was critical of the campus-based part of her university course in that it placed too much emphasis on theory, and too little on the procedural knowledge that would help her approach the first weeks of teaching confidently.

June also felt that her course gave consideration to the needs of students, and to issues pertaining to the community, parents and the environment at the expense of what she termed 'survival techniques for teachers'. (This was one of several occasions on which June referred to her beginning teaching experiences in 'survival' terms). In this respect, June's thinking was in line with the findings of Dawes and Ticehurst (1978) who found a frequent reference to survival issues in a sample of beginning teachers, and with Bullough's comments that 'the intensity of the demands placed on beginning teachers and the struggle merely to survive make it difficult to put into practice some of the ideas presented during teacher education' (Bullough, 1989:148).

Summation

June began teaching under relatively favourable conditions. She received the confidence-boost of being offered a teaching position soon after gaining a teaching qualification; she avoided the drama of having to relocate to a different geographical area; she taught only subjects that she was qualified to teach; her students, while not generally highly academically motivated were, nevertheless, mainly cooperative and pleasant; while teaching a relatively full timetable, June's program was relatively free of extra-curricular involvement; and she had the support of her staffroom colleagues.

Yet June's beginning teacher enculturation was far from satisfying and trouble-free. Her teacher development was rendered more stressful and protracted by the related issues of

a) the tensions and problems created by the conflicting demands of biography and practice
b) her lack of a contextually-oriented classroom management plan, derived from her preservice preparation, which could underpin her beginning teaching practice
c) the isolated nature of her teaching caused by the situational factors of architecture and time-tabling

Discussion

While a thorough exploration of the issues arising from these case studies of beginning teacher development is beyond the scope of this paper, several significant themes will be considered.

There were notable similarities in the teaching context of Laura and June, particularly with respect to the impact of biography and preservice teacher education on their approach to teaching. Both teachers attested to the influence of family and friends, and they particularly valued teachers from their own school days as important influences in shaping their approach to teaching. Both drew heavily from the support of colleagues. Both Laura and June viewed their preservice teacher education as providing limited assistance with respect to the administrative skills and time commitment required of beginning teachers.

It is, however, the idiosyncratic nature of beginning teaching which emerged from the four case studies included in the broader study on which the present study is based, and the differences in the development of Laura and June exemplify this.

Laura entered teaching with a number of relatively well developed teaching skills, a tremendous love of her principal teaching area and an intense professional commitment. To some degree, Laura's enthusiasm and relative competence as a beginning teacher were a handicap in the sense that she took on- and to some degree had thrust upon her- a

plethora of extra-curricular and administrative duties. These extra-curricular duties were to exacerbate her feelings of exhaustion, probably prolonged her illness and, most significantly in the present context, impacted on the survival phase of her beginning teacher development. Indeed, the combination of illness, heavy extra-curricular activities and becoming engaged, resulted in episodes of regression to survival modes.

In contrast to Laura, June consciously avoided heavy extra-mural involvement. While June's development as a beginning teacher was not affected to the same degree by this impost, her experiences were nonetheless difficult. She found the pressures associated with teaching very demanding, so much so that she described a significant part of her first term as a teacher as a journey into 'Hell'.

In particular, June's biographical and preservice teacher education experiences left her extremely unprepared for the realities of first year teaching. As a mature-age teacher, she found she had lost contact with adolescents. She expected students to be co-operative, but many were not. She expected to have fun in the process of teaching, but found very little. She felt somewhat betrayed by a teacher education course that failed to inform her of how difficult the beginning teacher experience could be. Her isolation in the classroom was a telling factor in this regard.

Laura did experience some management problems, but her experience as a private tutor of music for five years, along with her own recent contacts with adolescents during her own schooling prepared her quite well in this regard.

June's development as a teacher, however, was adversely affected by her inability to manage some of her classes, especially her Year 8s. While acknowledging some personal inadequacies in this regard, June's propensity to frame problems in ways that attributed their cause to external factors was typical of 'survival' behaviour described by Bullough, Knowles and Crow (1992).

June's development as a teacher was influenced significantly by particular events during the year. For example, her ten day April break afforded her the opportunity to reflect on her journey to 'Hell' and to resolve to return to normalcy. She rested, joined a yoga class, and

returned to school resolving to be gentler to herself by finding a better balance between the demands of her job and her personal life. Similarly, 'critical incidents' such as her father's serious illness in mid-year and a particularly stressful incident with one of her year 8 classes in August, reinforced the need to put life's priorities into perspective, and also revealed the strong support available to her from administration and colleagues. Laura's engagement and her presentation of the school musical were 'critical incidents' that profoundly affected her development as a teacher. These events support the notion that teacher enculturation is no mere passive process and that linear progression through a series of definable stages is not inevitable.

The development of both teachers seemed to follow less a 'staged' pattern and more a 'rhythmic' pattern as described by Clandinin (1989). Neither teacher began in survival mode then progressed to another stage such as 'advanced beginner' (Berliner, 1988) or 'mastery' (Fuller and Bown, 1975; Ryan, 1986). Laura began teaching displaying many of the attributes of an advanced beginner, but found herself struggling to survive in response to the personal and situational factors described in this paper. June began teaching in survival mode, remained in that situation for the duration of her first year of teaching, but nevertheless experienced development at various times throughout that stage largely through the influence of events such as school holidays and various 'critical' incidents.

On reflection at the end of the year, both teachers were quite sanguine about the year's experiences. Laura's attitude to students had mellowed as she became accepted as a member of the local community, and particularly following her successful presentation of the school musical. With the pressures of end-of-year pupil assessment and clerical and extra-curricular duties, and her own teacher-appraisal, behind her, she spoke positively of the year's accomplishments and of the ways in which the year's events had prepared her for a more successful, less traumatic second year of teaching. There was every indication that the hallmarks of a teacher approaching the 'mastery' stage (Fuller and Bown, 1975) had returned.

June described herself in the December interview as a teacher 'in a clearing'. Looking forward, she could see paths, still somewhat overgrown, but nevertheless passages that could be trodden to make the

journey through the second year of teaching easier than the first. The image of one resting in a clearing and seeing more than just jungle ahead was immensely more positive, and indicative of a higher level of self-confidence, than that of 'drowning person', June's self image as teacher near the start of the year.

Both teachers had reached their own clearing, but by different paths.

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